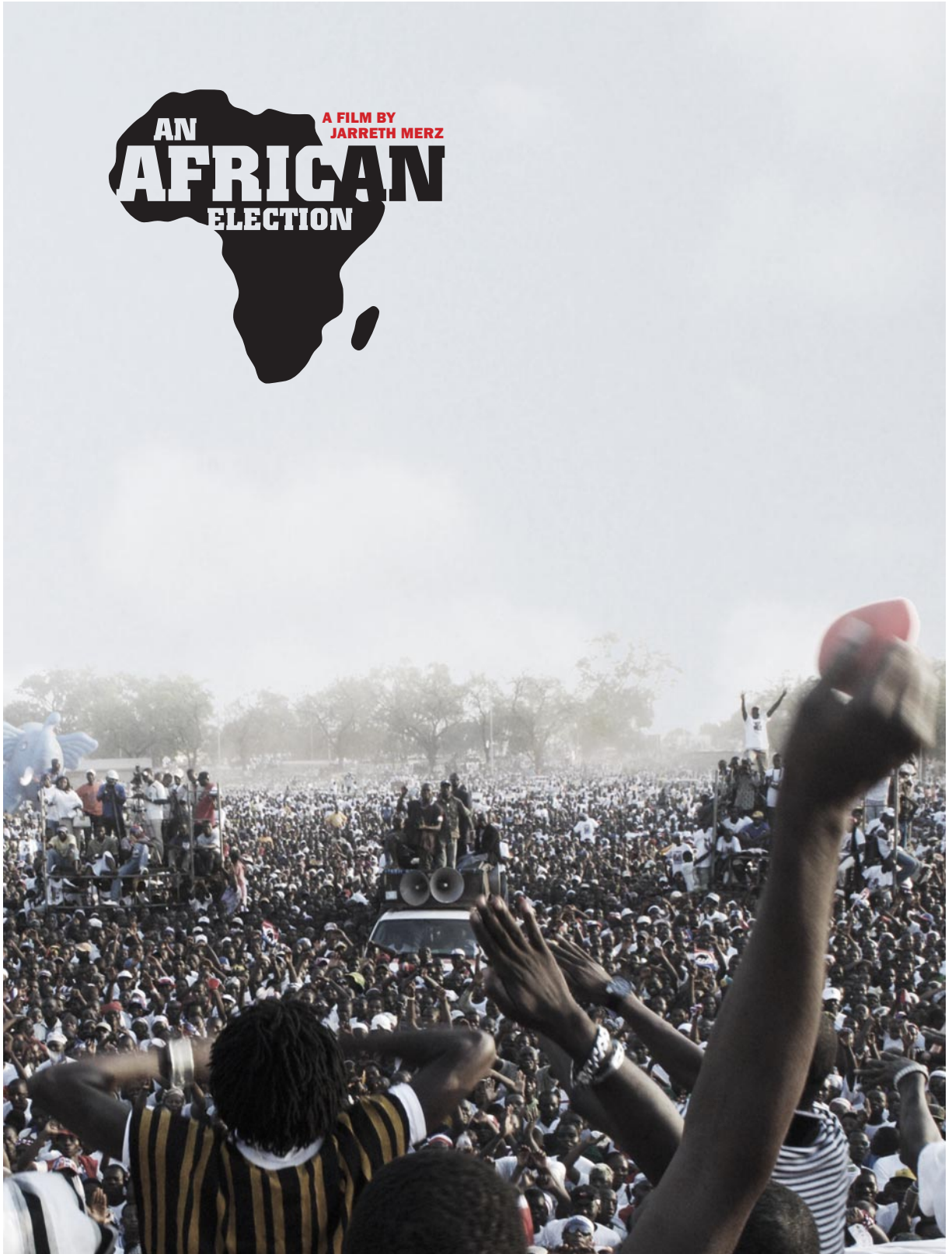


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**AN AFRICAN ELECTION**

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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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01

In 2008, while the world turned its gaze to the first presidential race in the United States in which a black man was running for president, the African nation of Ghana was also making history.

Ghana was the first Sub-Saharan country to gain its independence, in 1957. Since then, it has served as political barometer for stability in Africa, particularly in the conflict-ridden West. After only one previous peaceful transfer of power, the country again goes to the polls to elect a new leader – while the world waits to see if Western-style democracy can be maintained.

Swiss born filmmaker, Jarreth Merz, travels to the capitol city of Accra during the months preceding the election to take the temperature of the country and witness the campaign. After a 28-year absence Merz, who grew-up in Ghana, is eager to see how this once hopeful, third world country has progressed and where they are heading.

Although eight political parties and independents have entered the presidential race, the contest is primarily between two parties. The main contenders are Nana Akufo-Addo representing the NPP (New Patriotic Party) and Prof. John Atta Mills from the NDC (National Democratic Congress).

The stakes are high for both parties. While the NPP hopes to retain its power and continue the economic growth it began, the NDC desperately needs to win. A loss could permanently wipe them off the political landscape. Plus, each party wishes to control the future of large oilfields discovered off the Ghanaian coast that promise great wealth for the country – and for those in power.

Merz meets and travels with the still popular, former President and founder of the NDC, Jerry John Rawlings, as he campaigns for Prof. Atta Mills. A military pilot and revolutionary, Rawlings won the first democratic presidential elections of Ghana's Fourth Republic in 1992. After Rawlings was termed-out in 2000, his party lost to John Kufuor of the NPP.

During his two-terms, President Kufuor, led the country into a modern business era with development and investment in industry, banking and real estate. There was considerable economic growth during his presidency and the western world, once again, viewed Ghana a stable, African partner.

As Kufuor's term ends, the contest to see if Ghanaians will keep the NPP or kick them out is heating up. Merz and his two camera teams join the candidates during their political campaigning throughout the country. They travel from bustling urban cities to remote rural villages to find out what the people hope to gain from the election. Juxtaposing candid interviews with commentary from journalists and behind-the-scenes footage of party leaders, Merz provides an in-depth view of the forces at work politically, economically and socially. The filmmakers capture the suspense that builds along the road to victory, as each side encounters unforeseen twists and turns that make for a race that is always exciting and an outcome that is never predictable.



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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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### ABOUT THE PRODUCTION/FILMMAKERS CREW

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02

Produced & directed by Jarreth Merz

Co-directed by Kevin Merz

Executive Producers Franco & Brigitte Agustoni

Co-Producers Luisella Realini  
Silviana Bezolla Rigolini  
Tiziana Soudani

Director of Photography Topher Osborn

Edited by Samir Samperisi

Music Producer & Composer Patrick Kirst

Featuring Music by Ghanaba  
formerly known as Guy Warren

Special Adviser Arnold Merz

Camera Topher Osborn  
Kevin Merz

Production Sound Mixer Quirin Sieber

Sound Editor & Mixer Riccardo Studer

Additional Editing Volker Schaner

Co-Writers Erika Tasini  
Shari Yantra Marcacci

Graphics & Visual Effects Mikrofilme

Print and Media Lambert und Lambert  
Düsseldorf



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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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### TECHNICAL INFO

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03

Original Title An African Election

Duration 89 min

Format Digital HDV

Screen Ratio 16:9

Sound Dolby SR

Language Spoken English, Twi and other local languages

Filming Locations Ghana, Africa

Subtitles English

Year of Production 2010

Genre Documentary



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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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# 04

### SYNOPSIS

The 2008 presidential elections in Ghana, West Africa, serve as a backdrop for this feature documentary that looks behind-the-scenes at the complex, political machinery of a third world democracy struggling to legitimize itself to its first world contemporaries. At stake in this race are the fates of two political parties that will do almost anything to win.

Director Jarreth Merz follows the key players for almost three months to provide an unprecedented insider's view of the political, economic and social forces at work in Ghana. He builds suspense by taking the viewer down the back roads of the nation to capture each unexpected twist and turn in a contest that is always exciting and never predictable. Throughout the film, Merz depicts the pride and humanity of the larger-than-life politicians, party operatives and citizens who battle for the soul of their country.

### LOG LINE

*An African Election* is a suspenseful political drama that follows the twists and turns of the 2008 presidential elections in Ghana, West Africa. A drama of national proportions, it is told at a human scale through the eyes of its director, Jarreth Merz.

### PERSONAL NOTE OF THE DIRECTOR

Elections in Africa are subject to fraud and violence.

A democratic culture can only prevail in a stable political environment, yet the effects of poverty and social injustice remain a major threat to the stability of Africa's democracies. The desperation and hopelessness felt by the people are systematically exploited by the regional political machinery and by foreign economic interests. Can Ghanaians reverse this trend or will elections in Africa remain a sad cliché?



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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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### DIRECTORS STATEMENT

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05

An African Election started as my journey back to the Africa of my childhood. In 2008, 28 years had passed since I had last set foot in Ghana – a country on the West Coast of the African continent. I had spent seven years of my boyhood, moving between two cities: Accra, the country’s modern, coastal capital, and Kumasi, the capital of the ancient Ashanti kingdom.

With my fortieth birthday quickly approaching, my history had suddenly become important to me. The landscapes of childhood leave indelible marks on us all and I wanted to go back to the place where my emotional memory began. So I made my way to Africa to look for the traces of my childhood that would enable me to find out more about who I was by discovering who I had been.

I chose the year 2008 for my return, as the result of an inner calling. The fact that my trip occurred at the same time that presidential elections were being held in Ghana and that the United States was about to vote its first Black president into power, was coincidental. Yet, these elections, in both the U.S. and in the relatively, small country Ghana, would become a reflection to a man bracing for his forties. They would open my eyes to the reality of modern day politics in a fast-paced and globalized world; a world in which people were living between high-tech and the middle ages; a world in which money ruled and where hunger and fear still threatened to undermine cultural values and the integrity of man.

Still, Ghana seemed different. Despite poverty and hardship, the country had held on to the cultural and spiritual inheritance that had made Ghanaians a proud people. Did I have a cultural and spiritual identity? That was what I was here to find out.



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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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### AN INTERVIEW WITH JARRETH MERZ

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06

#### WHAT BROUGHT YOU BACK TO GHANA IN 2008?

I grew up in Ghana. Well, I was born in Switzerland but arrived in Ghana at the age of three with my parents. My family has roots in Ghana. My grandmother's side of the family goes back to the Ashanti. To this date the Ashanti kingdom is one of the most influential traditional kingdoms remaining in Africa.

I spent seven years in Ghana, between the Ashanti capital city of Kumasi and the country's capital, Accra. I grew up in a diverse cultural environment marked by different ethnic and traditional influences. Ghana has a myriad of indigenous groups spread out through the ten regions of the country. Interesting enough for Ghana is the fact that most ethnic groups inter-marry, which I believe plays an important role in the stability of the country.

I attended local schools, then the Lincoln International School, an American school in Accra and later the Swiss school. As the political climate in Ghana was heating up we were preparing to return to Switzerland, so my parents thought it wise to learn how to read and write in German.

The early '70s marked a time of artistic and musical excellence in Ghana, but by the end of the decade the country had lapsed into political instability and mismanagement. In 1979, I experienced my first military coup. As a child it seemed more exciting than frightening. Even when the execution of political leaders was broadcast live on TV, I wasn't fully aware of what was really going on. I was only nine by then. Nonetheless, the images of the execution on television stayed with me forever.

A year after the 1979 revolt we packed our bags and left the country. The economy was at rock bottom; inflation was high and the hopes of the nation low. At the time I believed we were going on a vacation so I didn't bid the country, my friends and pets farewell.

28 years later I returned to the playground of my childhood memories, maybe just with the excuse to round off a chapter in my life. I arrived to Ghana with the excuse of making a documentary about the country. I was looking for images, scents, tastes and sounds of the past.

#### WHAT WERE YOU HOPING TO FIND?

I was trying to find traces of my past. I'm turning 40 in May and I was looking for missing links in my life. I had the desire to fill-in some gaps; that's all. I became aware of how important identity was to me and I had questions on my mind. What better way I thought, than to start with boyhood. I met with old friends, whom I hadn't seen in over 28 years. The food tasted the same; the languages sounded the same; yet, obviously it wasn't the same.



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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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### AN INTERVIEW WITH JARRETH MERZ

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07

#### WHAT WERE THE MAIN DIFFERENCES YOU NOTICED BETWEEN THE AFRICA OF YOUR CHILDHOOD AND THE ONE TO WHICH YOU RETURNED?

I had changed and so had the country. In the early '70s the population of Ghana was around five million. To date, about 25 million people live in the country. So you can imagine the traffic and noise levels I encountered. Contemporary architecture and skyscrapers had replaced the majority of colonial and modern buildings. The semi-open-air cinemas – where I first encountered the delicious smell of kebab on charcoal fire, mixed with a Chinese martial arts film – had all been converted to churches. Where there had been open fields, there were now modern, urban family houses, neatly squeezed together. The make and models of the cars had changed. Where you had once seen Peugeots and Land Rovers you now saw Toyotas and some Chinese brands I had never heard of before.

But, most importantly, Ghana had become a stable country with a democratically elected government, and one in which people had access to universal healthcare – something that the U.S. was still at odds with. I forgot to mention, I studied most of what I learned about film in New York and Los Angeles. To answer your question, I left the country when free and fair elections in a democratic environment were a dream and I returned when it had become a reality, though still a relatively new reality of only 16 years. For Africa, it might seem like a lot. But let's be realistic, it's not.

#### WERE YOU ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH THE POLITICS OF THE COUNTRY, OR WAS MAKING THIS FILM A CRASH COURSE FOR YOU?

I was always aware of Ghana's politics. Prominent political figures from all ideologies on the political spectrum were part of a close circle of friends of the family, so I grew up with politics walking into and out of my home. But making this film brought an awareness of how fragile the political arena can be – yet, how strong when people truly want their country, and not just an agenda, to succeed. Yes, it was a crash course.

#### WAS IT DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN ACCESS TO THE CANDIDATES AND PARTY MEETINGS?

It was challenging because nobody knew who we were. At the same time, I believe that is what gave us unprecedented access to unknown political territory. I must also add that many of the key political players knew of my Ghanaian roots and had known my parents in one way or another. I also believe we were one of the first foreign film crews to arrive several months prior to the elections. People simply got used to us.

#### WAS EITHER PARTY MORE EAGER TO WORK WITH YOU THAN THE OTHER?

Difficult question. I don't know if they just tolerated us out of pity or even knew exactly what we were doing. I don't even know if I knew what I was doing. I had come to Ghana to trace the footsteps of my nostalgic memories and suddenly found myself on stage in front of thousands of cheering people during a political rally. There was a moment when I decided to abandon my original idea of making a personal film about my own journey and signed up for one about the journey of a country and its people. Some people did grant us more access than others and that shows in the film.



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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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### AN INTERVIEW WITH JARRETH MERZ

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08

#### **DID YOU APPROACH THE EVENTS WITH A PRECONCEIVED NARRATIVE IN MIND?**

Not really. We shot more than 220 hours of film not knowing where this story was headed. I did want to make a film about the elections but had no clue where the events would lead us. We started following several characters, then lost track of them because they suddenly disappeared or because I lost interest in their stories. I must admit though, that I captured inspiring footage of many people and events whose stories, unfortunately, remain untold.

#### **WERE THERE ANY SITUATIONS IN WHICH YOU OR YOUR TEAM WERE IN DANGER DURING THE FILMING?**

Whenever you have people firing with live ammunition, riots breaking out, your car being pounded with brick-sized stones or a mob of a thousand or more people threatening to squash you, you are in danger. And then of course you are confronted with malaria and other diseases. Fortunately we had a great crew that included locals who had been a part of my childhood. They helped me to understand the political and ethnic dynamics in the country, which I had been oblivious to, thereby protecting me and my crew and keeping us out of danger as much as possible.

#### **YOU WORKED WITH YOUR BROTHER ON THIS PROJECT. IS HE A FREQUENT COLLABORATOR?**

He's one of the best in the business. When he's available and likes the project, we collaborate. We both speak five different languages, but we don't need to talk too much to understand each other. We worked on a project called Glorious Exit, a documentary filmed in Nigeria. It's the story of a man coming home to bury a father he hardly knew and all the obstacles he encounters in the process. Altogether, I worked with a very young and talented crew that was open to an unpredictable adventure.

#### **COVERING AN ELECTION AS A DOCUMENTARIAN, IT IS PROBABLY ONE'S INTENTION TO REMAIN NEUTRAL, BUT AS YOUR EXPOSURE TO THE PARTIES PROGRESSED, DID YOU FIND YOURSELF FAVORING ONE SIDE OVER THE OTHER?**

Yes it did happen. You simply like some people more than others; some treat you better than others do. The interactions make you rethink and change your opinion – again and again. The back-and-forth assessments go on until you realize: Stop! You are making a film about politics and not a “who's the nicest-guy-on-the-block and promises to change-the-world-for-the-better contest.” You follow what you know could be your story, that's it.

#### **WAS THERE A PARTICULAR LOOK YOU WERE TRYING TO ACHIEVE WITH THE CINEMATOGRAPHY IN THIS FILM? DID YOU HAVE A MODEL OR IDEA OF WHAT YOU WERE GOING FOR?**

When we were Kings is an all time favorite of mine. The intimate camera and the dynamic editing used in that film always made you feel a part of what was going on. The use of handheld camera, extreme close ups and long lenses create an unusual and beautiful esthetic. It is truly a documentary in its rawness but one with a cinematographic ambition. The idea was to create cinematic images no matter how unpredictable those shots would be. I wanted both, the events as they unfolded in the here and now, and I wanted them to look good.



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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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### AN INTERVIEW WITH JARRETH MERZ

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09

**AS SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN A CITIZEN OF MORE THAN ONE COUNTRY, HOW MUCH DID GHANA FEEL LIKE HOME AND HOW MUCH DID YOU VIEW IT AS AN OUTSIDER? WAS ANYTHING ABOUT THIS DYNAMIC A STRUGGLE FOR YOU?**

The people of Ghana made me feel at home. They are unique; they are generous and loving. Nonetheless, I was physically exhausted by the harsh, living conditions and the pace of making the film. I was adjusting to being gone for almost three decades and comparing my past with the reality before me. I was struggling with the disappointment of discovering that, after 28 years, the country still suffered the kind of poverty I was encountering.

Believe me when I say, there has been improvement and progress, but not at the level I expected. After traveling around the country from one end to the other, I must say that I feel that I have failed – that we all have failed. I think that as long as I pass by people in the streets living in poverty, whether I'm in Los Angeles or in Africa, and say to myself how sad and terrible, then run off to dinner and maybe later to donate for a good cause like a water fountain in Nicaragua, something is deeply wrong. Naturally there will always be people who have more than others – or less, which sometimes might be better – but if I don't give poverty true value and meaning in my life, how can the collective?

Yes the world has failed Africa but Africa has also failed itself. Nonetheless aid is needed there, especially in those places that are being exploited by special interests – which by the way, is a universal phenomenon. It doesn't mean we can't improve things, but I believe we first have to accept failure rather than always trying to point out what has been successful. Something is altogether wrong in how we see Africa and how Africans see themselves. I'm holding up a mirror with this film. Sometimes when we look into a mirror we are fooled because we see only what we want to see. For instance, we donate money, we build hospitals and we believe that is enough. But, I'm trying to reflect back, to myself and to others, that it's not only about what we give, but what we take. We shouldn't be fooled by our own reflections.

I don't know, let's watch the film and see.

**WHAT DID YOU HOPE TO PORTRAY IN THIS FILM AND WHAT DO YOU HOPE VIEWERS TAKE AWAY FROM IT?**

We portrayed a nation taking its political destiny in its own hands, constantly fighting obstacles to continue the road to a permanent democratic culture and stability. I tried to provide a more indepth view and access to a world about which most of us know very little. Ultimately the audience will decide what to do with it. I'm giving them a piece of my Africa. What more can I ask for?



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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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### ABOUT THE FILM'S SUBJECTS: WHO'S WHO IN AAE

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# 10

#### KEY FIGURES

##### JERRY JOHN RAWLINGS

Jerry John Rawlings is a former military commander who ruled Ghana for almost 19 years. In 1981 he led a military coup and installed himself as head of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), which ran a government of participatory democracy. In the early 1990s pressure from groups both inside and outside Ghana forced the PNDC to adopt constitutional rule. Rawlings retired from the Armed Forces and set up the National Democratic Congress (NDC). As the NDC candidate, he won two consecutive elections, and served as the first President of the Fourth Republic from 1992-2000. After two terms in office, Rawlings was barred by the constitution from standing in another election. The NDC lost the two subsequent elections to the main opposition party, the New Patriotic Party (NPP). President Rawlings was the joint recipient of the 1993 World Hunger Award.

##### JOHN KUFUOR

John Kofi Agyekum Kufuor served as the second President of the Fourth Republic of Ghana (2001-2009) and Chairperson of the African Union (2007-2008). The victory of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), with Kufuor as their candidate, at the end of Jerry Rawlings' second term marked the first peaceful democratic transition of power in Ghana since the country's independence in 1957. As a liberal-democrat, President Kufuor promoted the Five Priority Areas Programme, a socio-economic vision that pursued: good governance, agricultural modernization, private sector participation, enhanced social services and infrastructural development. During his term, Ghana obtained a \$500 million grant from the U.S. Millennium Challenge Account for economic development.

##### NANA AKUFO-ADDO

Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo is a Ghanaian politician, lawyer and diplomat. He was one of the founding members of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in 1992. During President John Kufuor's two terms in office, Akufo-Addo served as Attorney General and Minister of Justice (2000-2003) and Minister for Foreign Affairs (2003-2007). In 2007, Akufo-Addo was elected to represent the NPP as their 2008 presidential candidate.

##### PROF. JOHN ATTA MILLS

John Evans Atta Mills is the current President of Ghana. President Atta Mills earned a Ph.D. in Law from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London – writing his final thesis on taxation and economic development. He spent almost 25 years teaching at various universities. Then in 1997, he became Vice President under President Jerry Rawlings. He campaigned unsuccessfully in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections as the candidate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). In 2008, he defeated the ruling party (NPP) candidate Nana Akufo-Addo.



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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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### PROFILES OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES

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# 11

#### 2008

While the two main political parties in Ghana, the NPP and the NDC spring from disparate roots, both parties follow largely the same ideological line – both in terms of manifestoes and policies: neo-liberal economics and liberal democracy, with populist tendencies. Neither party conducts campaigns in strictly ideological terms. Whereas the NPP has traditionally catered to the conservative middle class and the elite and the NDC to the working classes, rural folks and youth, past elections indicate that both parties score across these class and demographic lines.

#### NPP

The New Patriotic Party (NPP) is the political descendant of Ghana's first political party, the United Gold Coast Convention (1947). It emerged as the NPP in 1992, when the ban on political parties was lifted. In both 1992 and 1996 the party lost elections to the NDC's Jerry John Rawlings. Then, in 2000, presidential candidate, John Kufuor and the NPP won the elections. This was the first time in Ghana's history that power had changed hands through the ballot box. The NPP, a centrist, right-leaning liberal democratic party, mostly representing a conservative middle class and the country's elite, won a second election in 2004. It is the goal of the party, and their candidate Nana Akuffo-Addo, to continue its reign of political influence.

#### NDC

The National Democratic Congress (NDC) was formed in 1992 from followers of the departing Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government. The PNDC had risen to power in a military coup in 1981 and had ruled the country for over 10 years. The NDC's presidential candidate, Jerry John Rawlings, who had been the chairman of the PNDC, won elections in 1992 and 1996. After losing the subsequent elections in 2000 and 2004, the NDC, a centrist left-leaning social democratic party that draws its support from Ghana's working classes and youth, remains the largest opposition party. In order to avert another defeat, which could weaken his party's influence further, founder Rawlings is helping to campaign for NDC presidential candidate Prof. Atta Mills.



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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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### ELECTION RULES AND PROCEDURES IN THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

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# 12

- > Since 1992, Ghana has held four presidential and parliamentary elections. The elections are held every four years.
- > The president is the head of state, head of government and Commander-in-Chief of the Ghana Armed Forces.
- > The president is elected by a fifty percent plus one majority of Ghanaian voters.
- > The Parliament of Ghana currently consists of 233 members, each representing a constituency.
- > All citizens have the right to form or join political parties and to participate in political activities. There are currently 15 registered political parties in Ghana, including:
  - NPP New Patriotic Party
  - NDC National Democratic Congress
  - PNC People's National Convention
  - CPP Convention People's Party
- > Of these parties, only the NPP, NDC, PNC and the CPP have representation in Parliament.
- > The Electoral Commission (EC) was established by the Constitution and consists of a chairman and six other members. The EC is subject only to the Constitution and is responsible for the supervision of all public elections.
- > Every Ghanaian of sound mind, who is at least 18-years-old, has a right to vote. The EC is responsible for both the registration of voters and the conduct of elections.
- > The EC trains observers and monitors to ensure that the elections are free and fair.
- > Voting is by secret ballot.
- > Voting begins at 7a.m. and ends at 5p.m.
- > Once ballots are cast the presiding officer who is an official of the EC counts them at the polling station. The count is made in the presence of the candidates or their representatives – known as Polling Agents.
- > The Polling Agents sign off the results before they are announced to the Returning Officer.
- > The Returning Officer collates the polling station results at the constituency collation center before submitting the results to the EC.
- > The final results are then authenticated and announced by the Electoral Commission.



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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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### HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF EVENTS

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13

#### TIMELINE: GHANA A CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS



Ghana's most famous son  
*Kofi Annan* is recognized throughout the world  
as the public face of the United Nations.

- 1482 Portugal sets up a trading settlement.
- 1874 England proclaims the coastal area a crown colony.
- 1925 The first legislative council elections take place.
- 1957 March - Ghana becomes independent with Kwame Nkrumah as prime minister.
- 1960 Ghana is proclaimed a republic; Nkrumah is elected president.
- 1964 Ghana becomes a one-party state.
- 1966 Nkrumah is overthrown in a military coup; Russian and Chinese technicians are expelled.
- 1969 A new constitution facilitates the transfer of power to a civilian government led by Kofi Busia.
- 1972 Busia ousted in a military coup led by Colonel Ignatius Acheampong.
- 1978 Acheampong is forced to resign; General Frederick Akuffo takes over.



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### HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF EVENTS

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14



#### African trail blazer

*Kwame Nkrumah* triggered a wave of liberation movements. Hailed as hero when he led Ghana to independence in 1957, he fell from grace as the economy collapsed and he became ever more authoritarian. He was ousted in 1966.

#### Rawlings era

- 1979 Akuffo is deposed in a coup led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings. Acheampong and Akuffo are tried and executed on charges of corruption.
- Sept. 1979 Rawlings hands over power to an elected president, Hilla Limann.
- 1981 After two years of weak government and economic stagnation, Limann is ousted in a military coup led by Rawlings.
- 1983 Rawlings adopts conservative economic policies, abolishing subsidies and price controls, privatizing many state enterprises and devaluing the currency.
- 1992 A referendum approves a new constitution introducing a multiparty system. Rawlings is elected president.
- 1994 1,000 people are killed and an additional 150,000 are displaced in the Northern Region following ethnic clashes between the Konkomba and the Nanumba over land ownership.
- June 1994 Seven ethnic groups become involved in violence in the Northern Region – they later sign a peace agreement.
- 1995 Government imposes curfew in the Northern Region as renewed ethnic violence results in 100 more deaths.



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**Coup leader**

Air Force pilot *Jerry Rawlings* ruled for two decades. In 1979 he ousted the military and handed power to an elected president. In 1981 he seized power. Rawlings won elections in 1992 and 1996. He stood down in 2001 and continues to lead the main opposition party.

1996 Jerry Rawlings is re-elected president.



President *Kufuor* is known as the "Gentle Giant"

**Kufuor elected**

- Dec. 2000 John Kufuor beats Vice President John Atta Mills in the presidential election.
- Feb. 2001 Petrol prices rise by 60% following the government's decision to remove fuel subsidies.
- April 2001 Ghana accepts debt relief under a scheme designed by the World Bank and the IMF.
- May 2001 A national day of mourning is held after a football stadium stampede leaves 126 dead. An inquiry blames the police for overreacting to crowd trouble.
- June 2001 Government scraps a public holiday celebrating Rawlings' military coup, in an effort to wipe out the legacy of his rule.
- June 2001 Floods hit Accra, causing 10 deaths and forcing 100,000 to flee their homes.

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## AN AFRICAN ELECTION

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### HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF EVENTS

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April 2002 A state of emergency is declared in the north after a tribal chief and more than 30 others are killed in clan violence. The state of emergency is finally lifted in August 2004.



Cape Coast, once a centre of the slave trade.

May 2002 President Kufuor inaugurates a reconciliation commission to look into human rights violations that occurred during military rule.

Oct. 2003 The government approves a merger of two gold mining firms, creating a new gold mining giant.

Feb. 2004 Former President Jerry Rawlings testifies at a commission investigating human rights offences during the early years of his rule.

Oct. 2004 A group of current and former military personnel are detained on suspicion of planning to destabilize government prior to the elections.

Dec. 2004 Incumbent John Kufuor wins a second term as president.

April–May 2005 Thousands of Togolese refugees arrive, fleeing political violence in their home country.

April 2006 A boat capsizes on Lake Volta reservoir; more than 100 passengers are feared drowned.

June 2006 Visiting Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao promises to lend Ghana about \$66m to fund development projects. He is on an African tour aimed at opening new export markets for China's booming economy and to secure energy and mineral supplies.

March 2007 Ghana celebrates 50 years of independence from Britain.

June 2007 A major offshore oil discovery is announced. President Kufuor says oil will turn Ghana into an "African tiger".



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### HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF EVENTS

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17



Accra, the capital, is renowned for its beaches and nightlife. In 1877 it became capital of Britain's Gold Coast colony. Population: 1 million

- Sept. 2007 The worst floods in more than 30 years cause widespread devastation, destroying much of the annual harvest.
- Dec. 2008 The people of Ghana are getting ready to democratically elect a new president.



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### ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

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**JARRETH MERZ**  
**DIRECTOR / PRODUCER**

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Merz studied directing at the New York University and with Salem Ludwig at HB-Studio in New York.

In 2006 he founded Urban Republic Films. Projects include: *Abeka Junction*, a mystery thriller/family drama set in Africa that he developed with his brother Kevin Merz, and *Spurlos*, a mystery thriller/family drama set in Switzerland and based on a true story.

Merz co-produced *Nightshift*, a film by Shari Yantra Marcacci and Yantra Films. The duo is currently working on *Little Tokyo Hotel*, a lyrical drama set in Los Angeles and *Room 411*, the story of a bipolar concert pianist set in New York.

In 2005 Merz co-founded The Cell Film Production.

Merz is a Swiss born actor, director and producer. He grew up in Ghana, Germany and Switzerland and speaks five languages fluently. He is known for his portrayal of Simon of Cyrene in Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* and his recurring role as Charles Baruani in *ER*.

Merz has worked extensively in film, television and theater. Most recently, he directed and produced *The Soul of Ashanti* for the Africa Channel in Los Angeles and *Mousy Brown*, a narrative short. He is currently working on a bio pic about the life of Russian poet Alexander Pushkin.

**KEVIN MERZ**  
**CO-DIRECTOR / CAMERA**

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Merz was born in 1978 in Switzerland. He studied photography at the Italian Institute of Photography and Filmmaking at the Los Angeles Film School. Since 2005, he has been working as an independent filmmaker. His latest feature documentary, *Glorious Exit*, has won various international film prizes including: the Special Jury Prize for Best Cinema Narrative 2009, Astra Film Festival – Sibiu, Romania; the Gran Premio for Best Documentary Film 2008, Orense Film Festival – Orense, Spain; and the Walter Mosley Price – ex aequo 2008, Real Life Documentary Festival – Accra, Ghana.



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### ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

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**TOPHER OSBORN**  
**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

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Having worked as a cinematographer in Ghana, Guatemala, Northern Mexico, Southern Mexico and throughout the United States, Osborn has developed the ability to work effectively with international production teams in a broad range of environments. He is also a regular Second Unit Director of Photography for Banner Caswell Productions.

In 2009, Osborn finished his course requirements for his M.F.A. in Cinematography at UCLA, the nation's most competitive film program, which accepts only three DP's per year. He completed his B.A. in Mass Communications at the University of San Francisco in 2002.

He was awarded the 2006 and 2007 Student Panavision Grants, the 2007 Fotokem Technical Award, the Mary Pickford Award in Documentary Filmmaking, the National Association of Theater Owners Award, and the Edi and Lew Wasserman fellowship.

Osborn has had the privilege of training under Steve Burum ASC, Jonny Simmons ASC, Victor Kemper ASC, and Joan Churchill ASC.

**SAMIR SAMPERISI**  
**EDITOR**

Email: [samir.samperisi@gmail.com](mailto:samir.samperisi@gmail.com)

Samperisi studied editing in Lugano and currently works for film and television. His credits include *From Somewhere to Nowhere* and the award-winning *Glorious Exit*, which received the Special Jury Prize for Best Cinema Narrative 2009, Astra Film Festival – Sibiu, Romania; the Gran Premio for Best Documentary Film 2008, Orense Film Festival – Orense, Spain; and the Walter Mosley Price – ex aequo 2008, Real Life Documentary Festival – Accra, Ghana.

**RICCARDO STUDER**  
**SOUND EDITOR/MIXER**

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Studer studied sound engineering in Italy and has been working professionally for film and television since 1995. He also teaches at the university for visual communications.



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### ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

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#### **VOLKER SCHANER** **ADDITIONAL EDITING**

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Schaner was born in 1968 in Augsburg, Germany. He began his career soon after finishing the gymnasium, working as an assistant director to renowned director Peter Fleischmann on the films: *Hard To Be A God*, *Deutschland, Deutschland*, *Mein Onkel der Winzer* and *Mein Freund der Mörder*.

After completing his studies in Munich, Germany – in Slavic languages, literature and history – he directed his first documentary, *Praha – Stage Of The Unexplainable*. Schaner specializes in editing long-format documentaries and is currently at work on his second movie, *Lee Scratch Perry – Vision Of Paradise*, intended for international release.

He speaks German, English, French and Czech fluently.

#### **PATRICK KIRST** **COMPOSER**

Email: [contact@patrickkirst.com](mailto:contact@patrickkirst.com)

Patrick Kirst is one of Hollywood's next-generation of film composers providing a fresh and a unique voice in the film music industry. He recently finished his powerful lyrical score for *The Big Cat (Der Große Kater)*, featuring acclaimed actor Bruno Ganz (*Downfall*, *The Reader*) along with an all-star German cast. The political thriller will have its theatrical release in January 2010.

In 2008, Patrick collaborated with Disney Nature on their first nature documentary *Earth*, based on BBC's highly successful *Planet Earth* TV series.

In 2007 Patrick started his working relationship with critically acclaimed composer Aaron Zigman. Credits include this year's top-grossing romantic comedy *The Proposal*, starring Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynolds, *The Ugly Truth*, starring Katherine Heigl and Gerard Butler, *Sex and the City: The Movie*, and *Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium*, starring Dustin Hoffmann and Natalie Portman.

Patrick's recent documentary credits include *The Soul of Ashanti*, released on Time Warner's Africa Channel as well as *At the End of Slavery*, produced by the International Justice Mission, narrated by Danny Glover.

A great supporter of independent filmmaking, Patrick most recently scored the short film *Kavi*, which won the Student Academy Award 2009 - one of the highest awards for Independent Student Filmmakers. The short film *Have You Ever Heard About Vukovar?*,



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### ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

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directed by Paolo Borraccetti, was screened at the prestigious Aspen and Tribeca film festivals; the latter was founded by acclaimed actor Robert DeNiro.

Born in Southwest Germany close to the idyllic and inspiring French Alsace-Lorraine and the German Black Forest areas, Patrick began playing the piano at the age of seven and soon started improvising as a means of self-expression. His first works were written for piano and then later on for several theater plays at his high school.

After extensive studies at the Classical Music Conservatory in Karlsruhe, Germany, he was awarded a national grant to do research on the perception of film music. In 2000, his journey continued abroad through a generous scholarship from Rotary International. He attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston, followed by New York University, and then the University of Southern California (USC), Los Angeles where he studied under distinguished composers such as Academy Award nominee David Raksin, Golden Globe nominee Christopher Young, Jack Smalley and Grammy Award winner Joe Harnell.

In 2007 Patrick joined the adjunct faculty at USC. He is honored to be part of the incredibly talented pool of faculty members and enjoys sharing his experience as an artist in today's highly competitive film music market.



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